THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM): (a) There are 5 international airports, 87 domestic airports and 28 civil enclaves under the control of Airports Authority of India (AAI). Certain regional groupings have been made only for administrative convenience. No statistical data on region-wise airport capacity is maintained.

(b) Utilisation of airport depends on various factors like, length of the runway, terminal building capacity, navigational aids, traffic potential etc. Therefore, it is very difficult to classify airports based on capacity utilisation as the criteria. However, in general, 5 international airports and only few major domestic airports and civil enclaves are optimally used.

(c) It is for the airline operators to decide on the extension of their services to any airport subject to their commercial judgement.

[Translation]

Foreign Visits

3099. SHRI MAHENDRA SINGH BHATI : Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) the number of times Steel Delegations from his Ministry have gone abroad during each of the last three years;

(b) the names of the countries which the above delegations have visited;

(c) the purpose of foreign tours of the detegations; and

(d) the extent of benefit drawn by these delegations from these tours alongwith details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) The year-wise details of the delegation is given below :

Year	No. of Delegations
1994	7
1995	10
1996	9

(b) The delegations visited the following countries; Australia, China, France, Germany, Japan, Netherlands, Russia, Switzerland, U.K, U.S.A., South Korea, Belgium, Nepal, Ukraine, Hongkong, Italy, Romania.

(c) The delegations undertook these visite mainly for promotion of bilateral trade, participation in Joint Commission meetings, exploring and development of new markets for exports etc. and attending of technical seminars.

(d) The benefits accruing from such visits may not always be immediately quantifiable.

[Translation]

Steel Plants in the Country

3100. SHRI RAJKESHAR SINGH : Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) the details of small steel plants functioning in the country, State-wise;

(b) the production made by these plants during the last two years, year-wise;

(c) the problems being faced by these plants; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to solve shose problems?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) Besides the integrated steel plants, steel is also produced by the relatively smaller capacity steel plants comprising Electric Arc Furnace (EAF) and large number of Induction Furnace units functioning mostly in the small scale sector and scattered all over the country. As in December, 1996, 95 EAF units covering a capacity of 7.97 million tonnes were reportedly functioning in the country. The State-wise details of these units are given in the enclosed Statement.

(b) The production of the EAF based steel plants during the last two years is as under:

Year	Production
1994-95	3.07 million tonnes
1995-96	3.21 million tonnes

(c) The performance of this sector has been affected due to various reasons such as inadequate availability of power and increase in input costs like power, steel melting scrap and uneconomic production capacity, outdated technology, labour, financial and managerial problems etc.

(d) As most of these units are in private sector, initiative has to come from them to modernise and be cost-competitive in changed ecomonic scenario. Basides this, it has been suggested to the State Governments to consider supplying uninterrupied power to these units at concessional rates.

Statement

S.No.	State	No. of Units Functioning	Capacity (in tons)
1	2	3	4
1	*Northern Region*		
	Delhi	-	-
	Haryana	5	3,32,500
	Himachal Pradesh	3	1,50,000

1	2	3	4
	Jammu & Kashmir	2	36,000
	Punjab	8	3,66,500
	Rajasthan	2	1,22,000
	Uttar Pradesh	10	2,94,000
	Chandigarh	1	40,000
2.	*Eastern Region*		
	Assam	-	-
	Bihar	4	1,48,000
	Orissa	2	53,000
	West Bengal	13	3,65,500
3.	*Western Region*		
	Goa	1	1,50,000
	Gujarat	3	20,66,000]
	Madhya Pradesh	9	9,67,000
	Maharashtra	14	18,30,000
4.	*Southern Region*		
	Andhra Pradesh	3	1,27,000
	Karnataka	8	3,88,000
	Kerala	1	50,000
	Pondicherry	1	29,000
	Tamil Nadu	5	3,58,000
	Total	95	79,72,500 or say 7.972 m tonnes

Rural PCO

3101. SHRI RAMSHAKAL : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of exchanges in the country which link the rural PCOs;

(b) whether the Government propose to set up exchanges in all the Development Blocks;

(c) if so, by when;

(d) whether the Government are aware about the corruption being practised by Divisional Engineers in Telecommunication system established through PCOs; and

(e) if so, the action being taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) There are about 18,000 rural exchanges in the country and most of them have rural PCOs connected to them.

(b) and (c) There is no specific proposal to set up exchanges in all Development Blocks. However, as per policy of the Department, a Telephone Exchange is planned at a site when the paid Registered Demand reaches 10 or more.

(d) and (e) Some complaint have been received. Suitable action is being taken by the Department whenever such cases are reported.

Compensation to Persons Killed in Rail Accidents

3102. SHRI LALIT ORAON : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the amount of compensation given to persons killed due to train accidents for the untimely deaths differs very much;

(b) if so, whether the Government propose to bring uniformity in the amount of compensation given for untimely deaths;

(c) if so, the time by which a final decision is likely to be taken by the Government is this regard; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

[English]

Extension to Chairman, VSNL

3103. DR. BALIRAM : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to refer to reply to Unstarred question No. 5401, dated Sptember 12, 1996 and state :

(a) whether inquiry into the matter has been completed;

(b) if so, the outcome thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons for giving further extension to the Chairman, VSNL till his retirement;

(d) whether he is aware that the Chairman, VSNL has tried to influence the inquiry in this favour;

(e) if so, whether he is also aware that the Chairman, VSNL is trying to get the former Chief Financial Officer who was on deputation from DOT appointed as Director (Finance) so that he could get all the financial irregularities done by him, regularised by the Director (Finance);

(f) whether the Govenment propose to order a CBI inquiry to go into the nexus between the Chairman, VSNL and that former Chief Financial Officer in regard to all Financial decision taken by these two officers; and